

THE YOG OF TELLING THE DIVINE FROM THE DEMONIAL

Yogeshwar Krishn has a unique style of posing a problem. He first indicates the peculiarities of the issue in order to compel attention to it, and then elaborates and explains it. His treatment of action may be cited as an instance of this. In Chapter 2 he exhorted Arjun to act. He then suggested to him in Chapter 3 that he ought to undertake the ordained action. Elucidating its nature he pointed out that the performance of yagya is action. Subsequently, before describing the nature of yagya he dwelt upon its origin as well as upon what it has to offer us. In Chapter 4, he resorted to more than a dozen ways to unravel the nature of yagya, the doing of which is action. It is now that the meaning of action is made clear: that in the true sense it denotes yogic contemplation and worship which are accomplished by the operation of the mind and senses.

In similar fashion Krishn named the treasure of divinity and the accumulated hoard of demoniacal impulses in Chapter 9. After stressing their main features he told Arjun that men with demoniacal nature regard him but as a contemptible mortal. He has after all a human body and it is in this form that he has attained to his supreme state. But they who are evil and ignorant refuse to adore him. Blessed with the treasure of divinity, on the other hand, his devotees meditate upon him with single-mindedness. However, the nature of divine and demoniacal impulses has not yet been made clear. It is only in the present chapter that this task is undertaken and the first to be presented are attributes of the treasure of divinity.

1. **“The Lord said, ‘Fearlessness, inner purity, steadfastness of yog for knowledge, charity, continence, yagya, study of scriptures, penance, and uprightness,...’”**

Total absence of fear, inner sanctity, constant endeavour and meditation to acquire the truth, complete self-surrender, subduing

of the mind and senses, conduct of yagya (as laid down by Krishn in Chapter 4), offering sacrifice to the fire of self-restraint as well as to the fire of the senses, offering pran and apan as oblation to each other, and last of all the process of worship that entails sacrificing oneself to the fire of knowledge which is achieved by the inner workings of the mind and senses rather than by the yagya that is performed with oilseeds, barley-grains and an altar (Krishn accepts no such ceremonial act or sacrificial rite as yagya), meditation upon the Self which is the discipline that prompts one towards the identical Supreme Spirit, penance that moulds the mind along with the senses in accordance with the cherished goal, and integrity of the mind and heart as well as of the body and its senses, are some of the traits that characterize pious men.

2. “Nonviolence, truthfulness, abstinence from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of malice, compassion for all beings, disinterestedness, tenderness, modesty, abstinence from futile effort,...”

True nonviolence is salvaging of the Soul, for degrading the Soul is violence. As Krishn has avowed, he will be the destroyer of all mankind and generator of varnsankar if he does not carry out his task conscientiously. Since the character (varn) of the Self is that of God, his straying about amidst nature is varnasankar: this is injury to the Soul and his deliverance is nonviolence in the true sense. Truthfulness is not speaking what is apparently real or pleasing. Is it truth when we say that these clothes belong to us? There can be, in fact, no more blatant a lie than this. If we are not masters of our own persons that are mutable, or changeable, how can the clothing that but covers them belong to us? The Yogeshwar himself has spoken of the nature of truth to Arjun in asserting that there is no death of what is true in all the three divisions of time-past, present, and future. The Self alone is true; he is the supreme truth. This is the truth we have to fix our eyes on. Some other attributes of a righteous man are abstinence from anger,

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥२॥

surrender of whatever one has, renunciation of desire for the rewards of good as well as of evil action, absence of fickleness, avoidance of undesirable acts that are contrary to the aspired-for goal, feeling of mercy for all beings, non-attachment to objects even when the senses are associated with them, feeling of tenderness, shame at straying from the object, and keeping away from futile effort.

3. “Magnificence, forgiveness, patience, purity of thought and conduct, and absence of animosity and vanity-are (all) attributes of the man endowed with divine riches.”

Glory is a property of God alone and the one, who acts by virtue of this divine magnificence partakes of it. No sooner did Angulimal look at Mahatma Buddh than his thoughts were transmuted. This was because of the inherent greatness of Buddh-the greatness which generates blessedness. Krishn finally concludes his enumeration by telling Arjun that some other marks of the treasure of divinity are forgiveness, steady temper, innocence, hostility against none, and total rejection of the feeling of conceit. In all twenty-six attributes are thus catalogued and, whereas all of them subsist only in a seeker whose meditation has ripened to maturity, they partially exist in all of us. They lie in dormancy even in men who are dominated by evil impulses and it is because of this that even the most fallen sinner is entitled to redemption.

4. “Ostentation, arrogance and conceit as well as wrath, harsh speech, and ignorance are all, O Parth, the qualities of a man with devilish character.”

Now the respective operations of the two kinds of character are elaborated.

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥
दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

5. **“Since it is established, O Pandav, that while the treasure of divinity liberates and the demoniacal state acts as a shackle, you have no need to grieve for you are blessed with divine riches.”**

Possessed as he is of a sacred disposition, Arjun will surely attain to salvation and thus to the state of Krishn himself. But in whom do the wealth of divinity and demoniacal impulses abide?

6. **“There are in the world, O Parth, two kinds of beings, the pious, on whom I have already dwelt at length, and the devilish of whom you will now hear from me.”**

There are in the world two kinds of men, godlike and demon-like. When sacred impulses are active within the heart, man is godlike; but he turns devilish if he is rife with demoniacal inclinations. Whether born in Arabia or Australia or anywhere else, people all over the world are divided into only these two classes. After having spoken at length so far of godly disposition Krishn now proceeds to enlighten Arjun on the traits of demoniacal temper.

7. **“Wanting in inclination to both engage in proper action and avoid improper acts, the demoniacal have neither purity nor the right conduct, nor even truthfulness.”**

Men with devilish predilections are ignorant both of that which is worthy of being done and of that which ought to be escaped because it is unrighteous. So they are bereft of innocence, just conduct, and of the eternal verities. How their minds function is represented in the following verse:

दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।
मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पांडव ॥ ५ ॥
द्वौ भूतसर्गो लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च ।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥ ६ ॥
प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ ७ ॥

8. **“Since the world, they say, is unreal, without shelter and God, and created by itself through mutual (male-female) intercourse, what else is it for except physical indulgence?”**

With such an assumption, the only purpose of worldly life is enjoyment of sensual pleasures. What else is there besides them?

9. **“Depraved and dim-witted because they hold such a view, these malicious and cruel people are born only to ravage the world.”**

With their nature corrupted by their dependence on a mistaken outlook, the only purpose of their existence is to destroy others.

10. **“Possessed of arrogance, conceit and wantonness, and immersed in insatiable lust, they subscribe to false doctrines out of ignorance and act wickedly.”**

Maddened by ego and cherishing desires that cannot be satisfied, these ignorant persons entertain mistaken beliefs and indulge in religious practices that are in fact unholy and corrupt. Even the presumably sacred ceremonies and sacrificial rites performed by them are nothing but perversions.

11. **“Beset by countless anxieties that stretch right up to death and absorbed in the enjoyment of sensual objects, they are firmly convinced that satisfaction of carnal desires is the highest goal.”**

Gratification of sensual desires is the only happiness for them and they are so enamoured of this thought that they strive only to

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥८॥
एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥९॥
काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचित्रताः ॥१०॥
चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥११॥

have as much of pleasure as they can, for there is to them nothing beyond this.

- 12. “Chained by hundreds of bonds of illusory hopes, and at the mercy of desire and anger, they wrongfully endeavour to store wealth for the satisfaction of their lust.”**

Even a single rope is sufficient to hang a person, while these people are enmeshed in innumerable aspirations.

Addicted to lust and anger, they are engaged day and night in wrongfully amassing of riches for the gratification of sensual desires. It is further said in this context:

- 13. “Their perpetual thought is: I have gained this today and I shall have that wish; I have these riches and I shall have more in the future.”**

And-

- 14. “I have slain that enemy and I shall also slay other enemies; I am God and the holder of sovereignty.**

Besides being under the illusion that they are perfect, strong, and happy, they are also vain regarding their great fortune and noble birth, and they mistakenly believe that they are unequalled.

- 15. “Thus deluded by ignorance they think: I am wealthy and noble-born. Who can equal me? I shall perform yagya, give alms, and lead a life of bliss.”**

They are victims of even more delusions. However, there is a problem here. All that these men do are said to be an outcome of ignorance. Is it, we may ask, also ignorance to practise yagya and

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।

ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसंचयान् ॥१२॥

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्थनम् ॥१३॥

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥१४॥

आढयोऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदुश्यो मया ।

यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्ये इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥१५॥

charity? Before further dwelling upon the problem in the seventeenth verse, Krishn takes up the question of the ultimate end of these ignorant, deluded men.

- 16. “Misled in many a way, entangled in the webs of attachment, and inordinately fond of sensual pleasure, they fall into the most defiled hell.”**

Krishn will later throw light upon the nature of this hell, but in the meantime he reverts to the problem of the apparently sacred acts of the ignorant:

- 17. ‘These conceited persons, intoxicated by vanity and wealth, offer ostentatious sacrifices which are yagya only in name, in violation of scriptural injunction.’**

Rendered arrogant and senseless by wealth and worldly honour, these persons perform ceremonies and sacrificial rites which are only nominally yagya, and sacrilegious to boot. They do not observe the mode of worship laid down by Yogeshwar Krishn in verses 24-33 and 10-17 of the fourth and sixth chapters respectively.

- 18. “Subservient to vanity, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger, these wicked and degraded persons have a feeling of enmity to me who dwells in them and in all others.”**

According to scripture, memory of God is yagya. They who forsake this way and perform only nominal yagya, or do something or the other instead of yagya, abhor God and are hostile to him. But there are persons who continue to abhor and are yet saved. Are these enemies of God also going to be saved? Krishn’s answer to the question is that it is not so.

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ १६ ॥
आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७ ॥
अहंकार बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १८ ॥

- 19. “I forever condemn these abhorring, degraded, and cruel persons, the most abject, among mankind, to demoniacal births.”**

They who worship in transgression of scriptural ordinance are the lowly-born and the most degraded of people, and it is they who are judged to be perpetrators of cruel deeds. Krishn has declared earlier that he hurls such degraded persons down into hell. Now he reiterates the same when he says that he dooms them to perpetual devilish births. This is hell. If the torments of a common prison are terrible, how much more so must be the endless fall into inferior forms of life? So it is imperative that one must always strive to acquire the treasure of divinity.

- 20. “Instead of realizing me, O son of Kunti, these ignorant fools, conceived in devilish wombs birth after birth, are doomed to fall yet lower to the most degraded state.”**

This degradation is given the name of hell. So let us now view the origin of this hell.

- 21. “Since lust, anger, and greed are the three gateways to hell because they are destructive of the Self, they ought to be forsaken.”**

Lust, anger, and greed are the three bases on which demoniacal impulses rest. So giving them up is a profitable enterprise.

- 22. “The person, O son of Kunti, who escapes these three doors to hell, practises what is propitious for them and thus attains to the supreme State.”**

तानहं द्विषतः कूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ १९ ॥
आसुरीं योनिमापन्न मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ २० ॥
त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथालोभस्तमादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ २१ ॥
एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वैरैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।
आचरत्यात्मन श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

Only by keeping away from these three ways to hell is a person equipped for conduct that may reward them with sublime good and the final beatitude of attaining to Krishn. Only by abandoning the three perversions can a person perform the ordained task, the outcome of which is the ultimate glory of redemption.

23. “The one who transgresses scriptural injunction and acts indiscriminately according to his will achieves neither perfection nor the Supreme Goal, nor even happiness.”

The scripture in question is none other than the Geeta itself, which Krishn has described as “the most mysterious of all knowledge” in the twentieth verse of Chapter 15. The Geeta is the perfect scripture; and the one who ignores it and acts wilfully is deprived of accomplishment, salvation, and bliss.

24. “So scripture is the authority on what ought and ought not to be done, and having learnt that you have the ability to act according to the provisions laid down by the scripture.”

In the eighth verse of Chapter 3, too, Krishn told Arjun to do the ordained task. Besides stressing the ordained action, he has also pointed out that yagya is that action. Yagya is an image of that special form of worship which completely subdues the mind and leads one to the eternal, immutable God. He now adds that desire, wrath, and avarice are the three main approaches to hell. Only after renouncing these three evils does action commence-the appointed action which Krishn has repeatedly portrayed as the conduct which brings one the highest glory and supreme good. The more a person is engaged in external worldly business, the more alluring is the form in which desire, anger, and greed manifest themselves to him. The ordained action is on the other hand something to which access is secured only after the giving up of lust, wrath, and greed, and it is only then that such action is

यः शास्त्रविधिमुस्तृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३ ॥
तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४ ॥

transformed into habitual conduct. For the person who rejects it and acts wilfully, there is neither happiness nor accomplishment, nor the ultimate absolution. And scripture is the only authority that prescribes the righteous as well as the unrighteous. So it is incumbent upon Arjun to conduct himself according to scripture and that scripture is the Geeta.



At the beginning of the chapter Yogeshwar Krishn has given an elaborate account of the pious impulses that constitute the treasure of divinity. Steady meditation, total self-surrender, inner sanctity, restraint of the senses, subduing the mind, study that reminds one of the Self, striving towards yagya, mortification of the senses along with the mind, absence of anger, and calm intellect are among its twenty-six attributes that have been pointed out. All of these virtues dwell only in those worshippers who are engaged in the practice of yog and have come close to the desired goal, but they exist partially in all-in you as well as me.

Subsequently Krishn has named about half a dozen deviations such as ignorance, arrogance, vanity, and cruelty that make up the demoniacal hoard. Finally, then, he pronounces the verdict, addressing Arjun, that whereas the riches of piety bring about perfect liberation and realization of the supreme state, the store of devilish impulses shackles and degrades the Self. But Arjun is at the same time assured that he need not despair, for he is blessed with the treasure of divinity.

Which, however, are the abodes of the righteous and of the unrighteous impulses? Discoursing on this, Krishn has said that people's disposition is of two kinds, the pious and the impious. A person is godly if there is an abundance of the divine impulses in him, but is devilish if he teems with vices. Wherever they are born and whatever names they are known by, people cannot but belong to one of these two classes.

Krishn then gives a detailed account of the attributes of men who are cursed with evil disposition. Men with unrighteous predilections have no inkling of how to undertake action that is worth doing, nor of how to abstain from that which is unworthy.

Since they have not undertaken action, there is in them neither truth nor purity, nor the right conduct. According to them the world has neither any shelter nor God, and is just mechanically generated by carnal intercourse. So, indulgence is their ultimate goal, for there is nothing beyond it for them. Such a delusion was common in Krishn's age, too. In fact, it has always existed. It is not that only Charvak¹ has propagated such a view; it will be there so long as the human psyche is subject to the rise and ebb of divine and devilish instincts. According to Krishn, dim-witted, cruel men are born only to harm others and to destroy whatever is propitious. They insist that since they have slain one foe, they will now slay another. So Krishn tells Arjun that rather than slaying their foes these men who are slaves to lust and anger are really hostile to him-the God that exists within them as well as all others. Did Arjun kill Jayadrath² and others under a vow ? If he did, he is but a demoniacal character. He is then an enemy of God. But Krishn has explicitly declared that Arjun is blessed with divine riches. That is why he has been counselled not to despair. There is thus another evidence here that God resides in the hearts of all. It ought to be kept in mind that there is a power above that is constantly watching us. So it is essential that our conduct and performance of action should be in keeping with what is ordained by scripture, or else there is imminent punishment.

Yogeshwar Krishn has said that he for ever hurls down demoniacal, cruel men, again and again, into hell. But what is the form of this hell? According to Krishn, hell is repeatedly falling into low, sordid births; they are thus synonymous expressions. This degradation of the Self is hell; and lust, anger and greed are the three chief gateways to it. These are the three bases of demoniacal tendencies. Only a renunciation of these three marks the commencement of the action which has time and again been discoursed upon by Krishn. Lust, anger, and greed appear even

-
1. A sophist philosopher who propounded the grossest form of atheism and materialism.
 2. A brother-in-law of Duryodhan, after having been subjected to many humiliations by the Pandav for offering an insult to Draupadi, Jayadrath played a leading part in planning the slaughter of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun, and at last met his death at the hands of Arjun.

more tempting to those who are the more intensely absorbed in worldly affairs or even in decorous fulfillment of social obligations. Truly, therefore, only by eschewing these three does one gain admittance to the ordained action. And the scripture- the Geeta - is, therefore, the only authority to turn to, when one is faced by the dilemma of what to do and what not to do - of that which is worthy of doing and that which is unworthy. So the injunction is, to undertake only the unique action, ordained by this holy book - the true action.

Thus Yogeshwar Krishn has, in this chapter, elaborately described divine as well as devilish impulses and indicated that the human heart itself is the habitat of both.

Thus concludes the Sixteenth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of Supreme Spirit, the Science of Yog, and the Dialogue between Krishn and Arjun, entitled:

**“Daivasur Sampad-Vibhag Yog” or
“The Yog of Telling the Divine from the Demoniactal.”**

**Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition
of the Sixteenth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta
“Yatharth Geeta”**

HARI OM TAT SAT